

Executive Registry
67-3351

10 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Supplemental Comments regarding Roger Hilsman's Book To Move A Nation

1. Mr. William Colby, Chief, FE Division, has reviewed Hilsman's new book To Move A Nation with particular emphasis on its Far Eastern chapters. One interesting general point which Mr. Colby makes is that

"It is quite obvious from this book and from certain other publications recently that American policy making in its most secret councils must count on only about a three year time lag before detailed publication."

Mr. Colby finds the book to be

"... an excellent account of policy making among the insiders of the Administration (among which Mr. Hilsman is careful to count himself). It perhaps over-emphasizes this insider character and inadequately presents the participation and pressures of many on the immediate periphery of the inside group, i.e., senior Congressional figures, press figures, etc., although he does indicate the importance of public opinion in a rather general sense."

2. With respect to the chapters on China, Mr. Colby feels that Hilsman has written

"... an effective summary of a most complicated policy question which, as he indicates, is gradually being re-examined after a decade of freeze."

Hilsman appears to be aware that U.S. - China policies can only be changed in a gradual way.

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3. Mr. Colby finds the Indonesian section of the book "the thinnest in its contribution."

4. With respect to Vietnam, Mr. Colby finds that Hilsman has made an effective presentation of Hilsman's own position "with some emphasis stemming from hindsight." Mr. Colby adds that

"... aside from generalities about the importance of the guerrilla war, I have some doubt that the lines were as carefully drawn by him on this subject against the conventional military effort as his post-mortem suggests."

Mr. Colby's additional comments regarding Hilsman's statements on CIA in Vietnam are attached.

5. Mr. Bruce Clarke of the Office of the DDI has reviewed Hilsman's chapters on the Cuban missile crisis and finds them, by and large, to be fair to the people involved and basically quite accurate, although there are some minor inaccuracies. However, these chapters tend rather to aggrandize Hilsman's own role during the crisis. In particular, his writing leaves the uninformed reader to believe that Hilsman had a role to play in the ExCom meetings which, in fact, was not the case. Actually, his sections on ExCom are a distillation of the writings of Schlesinger, Sorensen and Elie Abel on the subject, together with such information as Hilsman must have obviously received in the course of his official duties. As a matter of fact, Hilsman himself is not mentioned in the Sorensen book and he is barely mentioned in Schlesinger's book in connection with the missile crisis.

6. One particular error is noted on page 212 where Hilsman states that "Dean Acheson had briefed General de Gaulle, Chancellor Adenauer, and the NATO Council, ..." on the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Actually, Mr. Acheson and Sherman Kent had briefed General de Gaulle, while Jack Smith (accompanied by U. S. Ambassador Dowling) had briefed Chancellor Adenauer. Mr. Kent and Mr. Smith did the technical briefing. Mr. Acheson did not proceed to Germany to see the Chancellor until a day or two later.

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Curator
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Attachment

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Mr. Colby's Comments on Mr. Hilsman's Views
on Vietnam

"... There are one or two points re CIA worth mentioning as well:

"a. Page 488, Mr. Hilsman states that the Acting Director (General Carter) also went over the draft of the famous 24 August telegram and approved it, adding the comment that the time had come to take a stand. This is not so, as General Carter and in fact no other member of CIA learned of its dispatch until after it had gone.

"b. The policy of 'pressure and persuasion' on Diem mentioned on page 510 was actually a policy only of pressure, this being a point on which I took a footnote in Secretary McNamara's report to the President after his trip to Vietnam in late September, during which Ambassador Lodge specifically and perhaps understandably requested that I have no contact with members of the regime.

"c. Mr. Hilsman is quite sympathetic with CIA's tribulations during this period pointing out that 'Richardson and the Agency were meticulous in clearing matters they thought might have political repercussions' and pointing out that CIA probably got the worst of the fact that the United States Government had not faced up to its policy problems. (Pages 499-500)

"d. Mr. Hilsman refers to alleged leaks by a junior officer in CIA (page 500), although he comments that the leaking problem was a general one throughout the Government. We inquired at the time into the likelihood of our officers leaking to the press and were assured by the Station that this was not likely. Nonetheless, it was certainly possible, since, as Mr. Hilsman commented, many of the Station's staff were in a considerable emotional state on the subject of Diem and Nhu (pages 498-499).

"The one matter that does come out rather well from the account re Vietnam is the considerable agony through which the whole Government went through with respect to Diem and that in this process there were no American villains or heroes, as all involved were trying to work through a most complicated and messy problem without clear guideposts for crisp decisions. In that respect it is an accurate and responsible account."

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